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1897

POEMS



BY

HENRY D. MUIR

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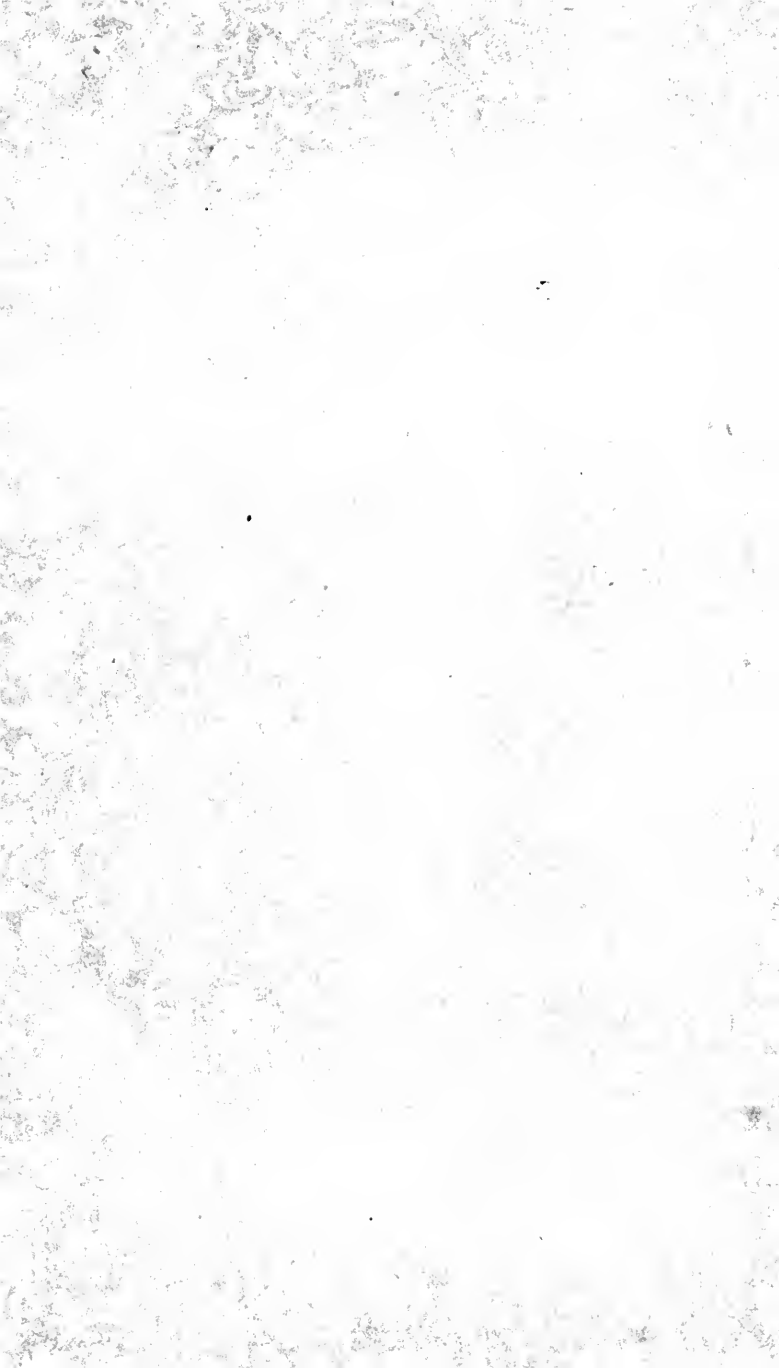
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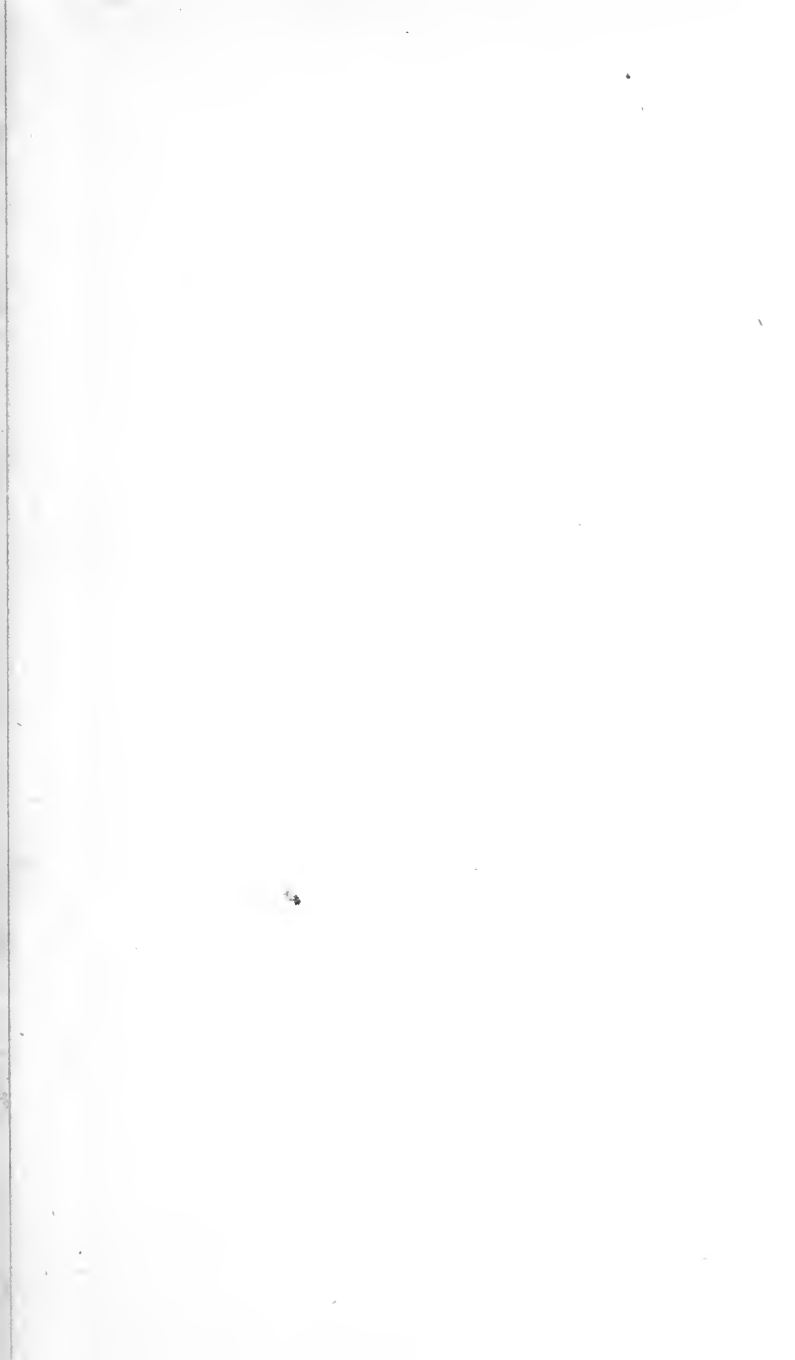
To C. G. Blandin;

From a fellow loiterer
among the foothills of Parnassus,

Henry H. Muir

✓

Chicago, Nov. 5, 1897.



POEMS

BY

HENRY D. MUIR

CHICAGO:

1897

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by
HENRY D. MUIR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

These verses have been selected from among those contributed to various local publications during the past seven years. The critical reader scarce needs to be informed that the poems in the latter portion of the volume were the first written.

Chicago, September 30, 1897.

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POEMS.

THE BOWER OF DEATH.

Summer's breath is sweet and warm
With full life and languid charm;
There's no taint or thought of death
In the air-enriching breath
Of Summer: her dwindled streams
Sing for joy to the bright beams
That rob them; her river coves
Hang green with health; fields, hills, groves,
Everything Nature possesses,
Summer blesses and caresses
With the touch of life complete.

But I know a lone retreat,
Where wild flowers blossom rarer,
Where the trees grow taller, fairer,
In their undisturbèd grace,
Than elsewhere; and in that place
Death hath framed himself a bower.
'Twas one sultry noontime hour,
When the sun through fainting air
Shot heat-arrows everywhere,
That my boat's prow turned aside
Screening leaves, and I did glide,
Like a shade through shadows whirled,
To meet the king of the shade world.

Let the fabling poets tell
Of the dangers that befell
Proserpine, ere she came forth
From dusk regions of the earth;
Let them paint, in colors somber,
Fierce and horrid shapes that slumber
In dark cells and drowsy caves—
Pluto's murder-willing slaves—
Yet the mind will not believe them,
And the soul will not receive them.
Earth, to senses world-oppressed,
Is a treasury of rest,
In which quietness is stored
By silent gnomes—a vast hoard,
Shared in peace and amity.
Though Earth's face be fair to see,
And the sun and moon adore it,
And the stars glow bright before it,
She hath beauty hid within
Her head, her breast—'neath the skin
Of mountain, plain and shining sea,
Which hides her soul's sublimity.

Thus, when gulping caves of gloom
Swallowed me, no thought did come
On the eagle wings of fear
To my mind, but all was clear
And terrorless; as though day
Scattered freely in my way
Lavish sunbeams and the sky
Arched blue above my head.—I,
In a strange half-swoon of peace,

Heard the dark waves chafe and tease
Jagged ledges of cold rock
And the roar and mighty shock
Of vast sunless waterfalls,
Till those subterranean halls
Were threaded and I was borne,
Like a sea-plant gently torn
From loose rootage 'neath the ocean,
Surfaceward with easy motion;
Guided, by a viewless power,
To Death's dim and covert bower.

There the stream was all o'erhung
With withered vines; dead moss clung
To the pine trees tall and dark,
And was seen no vital spark
Of plant-life in grass or flower.
Ev'n the faint wind wrought a shower
Of dry leaves and brittle cones,
Twigs, and sapless boughs—the bones
And the bark-flesh of dying trees—
And this pungent-odored breeze,
Gaining strength for lower rambles
O'er decay-sweet brush and brambles,
Scattered snake sloughs through the brown
And seared aisles, like thistledown;
Pillaging the serpent-dead,
'Midst the reeds, on muddy bed.
So this spot, verdure-surrounded,
And by health and beauty bounded,—
Like a sorrow that doth keep
In the heart securely deep,

'Neath the shifting surface joys;
Like a blight which, hid, destroys,
In a garden rich and fair,—
Lay all desolate, all bare:
For King Thanatos, at rest
On a couch by wood-nymphs drest
For his sole and regal use,
Could not choose but work abuse;
Blighting, ev'n with inert presence,
Every sweet and lifeful essence,

Yet this bower of gloom possessed
Charms, and every sense confessed
The potency of subtile spell;
For a web of quiet fell
O'er the sore and restless mind,
Shutting out the world behind,
With its care and pain and hurry.
Lulled by Death, secure from worry,
Here forever had I lain,
And the earth had found again
Her poor loan of dust and clay,
Had no faint and truant ray
Of the heaven-sweeping sun
Pierced the mystic woof and won
My soul back to life and duty.

Out into the vernal beauty
Of the world I paddled forth,
Tasting of the forest mirth
With new zest, till every sound
In my heart its echo found.
And the air was never sweeter,

Or the summer scene completer
In fair fantasies of bloom,
Than then, ere contrasting gloom
Of that nook so late forsaken
From my passive mind was shaken.
And ev'n then, as since, a flow
Of underthought, beneath the glow
Of free sense, came pulsating;
Taming, molding, leavening,
With slow, melancholy motion,
All that wild and formless ocean
Of rare joy, and chastening
The rank earth and everything;
Making death-thoughts sweet as life,
And life-thoughts less passion-rife;
Binding, twining, in one wreath,
The best flow'rs of life and death.

AN INVITATION.

All this golden day is mine;
 Mine the pure, life-giving air;
And the prodigal sunshine,
It is mine, O, it is mine—
 Mine to feel, and mine to share
 With all leaping hearts that dare
To meet its touch divine!

Let this golden day be ours,
 Brothers of the smoke-grimed town!
And the swift, unloitering hours,
Let, O let them all be ours!
 Though the tyrant Labor frown,
 Come and lay your burdens down
Among these trees and flowers.

For this golden day may hold
 All the best that Earth can give
From her treasures manifold;
O, this passing day may hold
 Regal joys, strong to outlive
 Sorrows keenly sensitive
In hearts grown weak and old.

SAND.

Out on the light-brown seabeach glad children are playing,
Romp in clean, soft sand, with spirits flowing and high;
Digging, tunneling, building, the whim of the moment
obeying,
Unawed by the protean blues of sea and of sky.

In jar and blur of the fierce, untamable city
Children play with sand of the builders, happy and loud;
Nature-starved, they seek not, expect not, your pity—
Anxious only to delve unmolested amidst noise and
crowd.

So may man's valorous soul, if given, for shaping,
The rich sand of life—by Time ever scattered and
whirled—
Break fated environments, unconsciously 'scaping,
Glow unabashed before nature, live unsubdued by the
world.

EARTH'S SECRETS.

No secret, Earth, thine ample breast
 In Summer's prime canst hold;
Thy dreams of peace, thy vague unrest,
 To the wide world are told;
For each small traitorous flower
Thou nursed and gav'st life-power,
And even now foldest into thy bosom kind,
Doth breathe to arching trees
Thy closest secrecies,
And the trees whisper them to the all-telling wind.

Not till grim Winter's ice and snow
 Lock droop-boughs rigid-tight,
And lay those tiny traitors low
 Beneath the prisoning white—
O Earth, canst thy proud dreaming,
Thy planning and thy scheming
How to array the Spring, to crown and garland her,
Be safe in thy deep heart;
And no wind mayst impart
To the cold world thy thoughts, nor guess their
 quickenings stir.

HEALTH.

To the healthy eye
The earth is never old,
The sky is rich with changing hues,
The fields with floral gold;
Each grove a world of beauty is,
Each stream a long delight,
A universe of joy is found
On every mountain height.

To the healthy mind
How deep, how full, is life;
How lifted up by noble aims
Above all aimless strife;
Piercing through Art for Nature's best,
But dearly loving both—
To such a mind her close-kept gates
Truth opens, nothing loth.

Come, O stranger Health!
O, come and bathe the earth
With a warm flood of ruby blood,
Cleansing Man's morbid hearth;
Leap like new fire within his veins,
And rouse his drooping soul,
Till he stands erect with spirit pure
And frame that's strong and whole.

ORSINO'S COURT.

In Orsino's lavish court

Gold doth shine and silver gleameth,
Tapestries of rarest sort

Deck those walls, and music streameth,
In sweet rivulets of sound,
From above, below, around;
Beauty walks, and Youth doth sport
In Orsino's court.

But Orsino's dreamy court

Holdeth dearer, prouder treasure
Than bright gems, or Beauty's port,
Or the careless smiles of Pleasure;
Love is there, and there is found
Deep soul-patience without bound,
Whilst Viola makes resort
At Orsino's court.

TWO VOICES.

You are weary of rhyming, O Poet, you are wearied, are worn,

With Art, its close boundaries, its gyves and its fetters;
Your verses, ev'n while you write them, do glance at each other with scorn—

The sentences despise their words and the despised words their letters;
And the completed legions of lines seem to wish they had never been born,
For they stand to the past and its poets like rows of impoverished debtors.

You are weary of life, too, O Poet, nigh wearied to death
With the dull, brazen stare of the world and its soul-smirching glitter;
And Earth hath a slow, morbid voice, and her morbid voice saith:

“Thou, Poet, who, living thy life, hast found it so bitter,
Why dost thou wrestle and fight for a poisonous mouthful of breath?

To lie in my bosom forever and sleep would be fitter.”

But, Poet, believe not the false and sophistical voice of the earth—

The myriad tongues of the air—the weird winds—are
singing;
Some shrill with the fierceness of passion, some soft with
the newness of birth;
But all truthfully bringing the message consigned to
their bringing:
“Though the wide sea of life should be choked with the
perilous bergs of the North,
Be thou, as a storm-beaten bell, through mist-walls
still ringing.”

AT SUNSET HOUR.

Could I but live this hour
Careless and free;
Be like a bird or flow'r,
Or cease to be;

Sweep with unresting wing
Heaven's blue dome,
Or drowse, low nestling
In Earth's perfume,—

Then would ignoble years
Of soul-decrease
Dissolve, like outgrown fears,
Before the peace

Of one brief sunset hour,
Fleeting away,
But yielding mightier dower
Than all the day.

NATURE'S VOICE.

We live in Nature's ceaseless sound;
Although we note it not,
Her melodies and discords round
Our every act and thought;
Making kind deeds more kind in kindness,
Mazing blind thoughts in blinder blindness,
Coloring pale threads of fate—
To joy adding joy, to grief's grieving
More grief, love to fond love, and breathing
Hate into the soul of hate.

Nature's proud voice is but a chirp
In the mighty choir of Time,
But no earth-child can e'er extirp
From his heart the rhythm sublime
Of sound-surges that beat and fill it,
Of passion-notes that stir and thrill it,
In endless pulse and free;
But still must sweep with the wave's wild reaches—
High, low, 'gainst rocks, up fair palm beaches—
At whim of the fateful sea.

THE DIM-SEEN TORCH.

Above the wreck and carnage of slow years,
And all their clinging fears,
Through fire, through smoke, through stanchless streams
of blood,

Cuba! at last I see
The torch of Liberty
Shine, though hid her face in war's tempestuous flood.

Soon on thy dripping hearthstone will she kneel,
And thy sad wounds will heal;
Thy death-white cheeks will glow with coloring life:
Fresh flow'rs will star thy hair;
Thy heart new hopes will share
With those warm sister hearts that bought their peace with
strife.

Cuba! thy cherished sons lie prone and dead,
But lift thy pensive head:
From the safe mountain, from the matted grove,
From plantain-shaded caves,
From o'er the ocean waves
Rally heroic souls, each worthy of thy love.

Already, Cuba, in thy watchful eyes
The lights of felt power rise;
Up from the earth thou rearest thy proud form:
Thou, too, dost dimly see
The torch of Liberty
O'ertop, with cheering glow, the dark and cheerless storm.

THE GIANTS.

I.

The grim and massy giants of the town
Lift their proud heads amid the swirling smoke
And view the clear blue sky with envious frown:
They cannot strike or mar, with tyrant stroke,
The mild, sweet face of Nature, or pull down
The spirits of the air to gasp and choke;
So on the prisoned earth they straightway turn
Their gaze—stern brows and eyes grown doubly stern.

II.

And all year long, around their pillared feet,
They watch the ant-like swarms that creep below;
That thin not for the summer's languid heat,
Nor fail when keen-teethed winds of winter blow:
There master, slave, the cheated and the cheat,
The millionaire, the beggar come and go—
Self-stung by life's Nemesis, the desire
To girt their very souls with Mammon's fire.

III.

These stalwart brothers seem to stand and mock
Their pygmy masters with disdainful look,
As though their mighty hearts of quarried rock
Retained some impulse of the power that shook

The mountains with unanswerable shock—
Some light and poetry of canyon brook,
Some majesty of cliff and sea-swept cave,
Which all the race of earth could ne'er enslave.

IV.

What scenes of pride and pulsing pageantry
Have lived their minute-life beneath those eyes;
Yielding their lofty place, their color high,
To changeless trade and pale realities?
What foreign sounds have joined in company
To feed those giant ears with music-sighs,
With riot echoes, with slow-tolling bell?
What have they heard, seen, felt? No tongue can tell.

V.

Ev'n should some Titan god (his age-dead youth
Recalling) animate each stony breast
With fire, and stir to speech those lips uncouth,
What language passion-warm could bear the test
Of their recited themes? tales dark with truth—
Stories of fouled ambition, cold unrest;
Of glowing roses robbed of scent and bloom,
Of heart-threads broken in the world's vast loom.

VI.

Of all the fated lives these monsters guard
In sturdy silence, with reluctant care,
Could we mark one and follow to the hard
Completion of its journey; could we tear
One throbbing heart—ensnared, outwitted, marred
By destiny—from the mute thousands there,

And hold it warm and close—O, what a story
Might press on our near hearts its record gory!

VII.

Colossal, dark, impenetrable, they stand,
Locking their gloomy secrets safe and deep;
Each bulk a sphinx, though no Egyptian sand
Engrains its firm-fixed feet: their eyes o'ersweep
A wide and shifting desert, ever fanned
By Fortune's gustful breath; where men may sleep
One night in an oasis of content—
The next may wander, weary, jaded, spent.

VIII.

O, if proud banners of the progressed years,
Mocking lost days of voiceless savagery,
Unfurl but this: "The world's imperial ears
Hearken to none but Fortune's progeny;"
If worthy vessels sink where one uprears
Its ensign on the crest of the chafed sea—
Then blush, O years, for ye have much to learn
Ev'n from those simple days ye mock and spurn!

IX.

Around these swarthy forms these giants wear
The noble spoils of many an ancient state;
The clear-cut gems of Athens sparkle there,
And Rome's huge splendors and the easy weight
Of wrought Venetian wealth alike they bear—
Stolid, indifferent—the mute guards of Fate.
Yet ever, 'neath the chains and veiling dress,
Is seen their own strong limbs' vast sturdiness.

X.

Time stops, aghast, before this mighty band;
They heed him not, nor heed they anything,
Save that dull-prisoned earth o'er which they stand
At sleepless watch; the winds of night may sing
Weird songs—they hear not; the lake's surly hand
May lash her white-maned coursers till they spring
High on the quivering shore—they move not: lost
In their sure selves, a world-ignoring host.

PLUTUS THE WORLD-CONQUERER.

I.

This quiet sanctuary, this my wood
That bowered me late in serene solitude,
And did inform my soul with visions clear
Of life's removed sphere
Sways now in quivering fear—
For see!

Down the fair vale, from mountain-cleft emerging,
In proud-hued pageantry,
Fierce singers of fierce songs of wild barbaric glee
Tumultuously surging,
Rhapsodically urging,
Over sweet clover-heads and grasses waving free,
A mighty force
Of foot and horse
And rattling chariotry.

II.

Behold!
In burnished car,
A-flash with studding gems and curious-figured gold,—
Afar;
But visibly clear, as ray
Of shafted light, above the morning play
Of broken beams, is clear
And goldenly austere—

Gigantic, proud—
A scornful figure views the sycophantic crowd.
On either side
Earth's monarchs ride—
King, emperor, and heavy-sceptered queen;
Columbia's self is there—
Bowing, her forehead bare—
And the maidens bright,
In simple white
Or draped in rainbow robes of rich and silken sheen:
All hearts applaud,
All minds are awed,
All heads low bend before the car-borne god.

III.

And is it thou,
Plutus! to whom the clustered nations bow
With reverence, or sing their heart-inflaming joy—
Thou, Ceres' son, but yesterday
A prankish boy,
In high Olympus schooled to listen and obey!
With cornucopia, teeming
With an exhaustless treasure,
Thou roved the world at pleasure,
And showered a golden gleaming
O'er the fertile plain and hill,
Withdrawing all at will—
But now;
Now, in thy massy form and stern, imperious brow,
I see the complete god,
The sole world-ruling king,
Feared conqueror of heavenly synod,
Master of man and brute and every earthly thing.

In lone exile the lofty Thunderer grumbles,
And his fierce spirit humbles;
 Apollo sulks aloof,
 Beneath his own bright roof;
 Neptune doth keep
 In deepest deep,
Where, through eternal gloom, the sullen waters sweep.
All scattered? No; the passion gods are here
That tease the human breast with hope and fear—
Love waits thy granting nod ere he may speak,
Justice before thee kneels, a suppliant meek;
 Religion, too,
At thy proud feet doth sue.

IV.

Frenzied desire
To leap into the throng,
To join the madd'ning song,
Engulfs my quickened heart in passion-fanning fire.
In swirl and glare my mind is overthrown—
The senses rule alone:
 A gold-bright key
 Is handed me;
 Strange imageries,
 Soft harmonies,
 Invite me on and on.
I ope the doors of Pleasure's palaces,
Loosing a thousand joys and dull satieties;
I thread secluded groves and bowers, faint
With odors rare and music's dreamy plaint;
I find wide dunes of all-neglected treasure,
 Beyond the eye to measure;

My breast expands with domineering tide
Of ecstasy and pride;
For round me cower,
Soliciting my wish, the abject slaves of Power.

v.

Is this my sanctuary? this my wood
That clasps me once again in solitude?
Is this the outcast Reason that doth brood
In old didactic mood,
Quelling the feverish blood?
I hear,
Borne from haze-hills, through trees no longer swaying
In gaunt and shadowy fear,
The surge of that wild band in cadence faint, but clear:
Their march for naught delaying,
But Plutus' laws obeying,
They follow o'er the world their lord and idol dear.—
All sounds are gone;
I muse alone
On life and life's mad sphere.

ARIEL'S VISIT.

*"Why, that's my dainty Ariel: I shall miss thee;
But yet thou shalt have freedom."—Tempest.*

Ariel again has come
To Earth: he has left his home
In the cloud-pavilioned sky
Where the daintiest spirits fly
With light, never-weary wings.
Hark! his every motion flings
On the gross and heavy air
Sweetest music: everywhere,
Over forest, meadow, lake,
Grassy hill and matted brake,
Throbs a melody divine;
Simple, lucid—like a fine
Thread of sound, dropped down by chance
From Apollo's realm to dance
Through the cold Earth's frozen veins
And feeble heart. All the chains
Man has bound to Nature's limbs
Broken are where Ariel skims
Through the dark and sullen world;
All the evil thoughts uncurled
In Man's ever-active brain
Now are lulled to sleep again.
Simple truth and gentleness,
And the soul-born arts that bless
Earthly life and lift it higher,
Warm with true celestial fire—
These alone seem now alive,
These alone do now survive.

Tiny spirit, fleet and fair,
Sporting in our lower air,
Linger! though it please thee not
To forsake thy heavenly lot,
Leaving all thy high delights
For such poor-contrasting sights.
Earth to us is rich and grand—
Sweet the fragrant-fruited land,
Beautiful the changing skies,
Dear the sea's uncertainties;
But we cannot gauge thy pleasures
By our own untruthful measures.
One can almost hear thee say:—
"Lo, what heaviness doth weigh
On my once so nimble wings!
O, what wild complaining rings
In mine ears! What vulgar light
Dims the broad harmony of sight!
O, these mortals, close confined,
Stinted so in soul and mind,
Flesh-clogged, moving sad and slow,
'Mind me of the long-ago;
'Mind me of the island-days
When witch Sycorax did raise
Fiendish spells and did confine
My limbs into a cloven pine—
There to weep twelve winters through,
Pitied by the forest crew,—
Even the rough-appearing bear
Whimpered in his rocky lair,
Sympathizing with my woe,—
Until mighty Prospero

Broke the charm and set me free.
O, with what exultant glee
Glided I through airy spaces,
Seeking well-remembered places
Of past pleasures and delights!
Then returning in the Night's
Vast arms, I did sing, and sing,
Making all the island ring
With sweet peals of fairy-sound.
Caliban upon the ground
Threw himself and listened long
To the air-enchancing song;
And his monster eyes did glisten,
As he raised his head to listen.
Pure Miranda, in the cell
Of her father, heard the swell
Of the music and did glide,
Fresh and beautiful, outside
'Neath the moonbeam-checker'd trees;
And I wove strange fantasies
Of high spiritual gladness,
Till the earthly look of sadness
Left her face and it grew soft
Like an angel's. Thus, aloft,
All the night I circled round
The dreamy isle, living in sound;
And all life rejoiced with me
In my new-found liberty."

Ariel from Earth has gone,
And the golden light that shone
From the myriad atoms where,

Through the music-haunted air,
He had whirled his fearless flight
Now has paled or vanished quite;
And the glowing harmonies,
Dying on the dying breeze,
Throb and sigh in echo-play,
As they faintly pulse away—
Ariel from Earth has gone,
Leaving the sad world alone
With its sorrow-weighted load,
Leaving Man, perplexed and bowed,
To his thousand sins and follies,
To his gnawing melancholies,
To his coarse and bloody food,
To his pleasures, fierce and rude,
To his slavish worshiping
Of the golden-thronèd king.
O, swift Spirit! when will he
Shake these bonds off and be free—
Free from all low-brooding care,
Free as thou art, now in air?
Must, O must he wait till Death
Claims him and his hoarded breath
Ere his spirit, fleshed and dull,
Can be lightly beautiful!

SONNETS.

THROUGH HALF-SHUT EYES.

When couched at ease in sweet, far-swelling vale
Youth lies, in summer, and beholds the skies
Through the lash dream-gates of half-open eyes,
Thrice whiter droop the clouds, all pearly pale,
Thrice bluer the sky-seas, wherein they sail
Like fair-rigged ships in squadron companies,
Than when, in saner and gross common wise,
Full-eyed is read the heavens' azure tale.

Thus, when the mingled senses of the brain,
Having but waked to life's strange ebb and flow,
Do half forget the truths to which they bow
In tame submission, and so dream again,
More beauty in that false mind-world will glow
Than in all Wisdom's courts and wide domain.

AN ILLINOIS PRAIRIE.

No antique verse from Saadi's garden-dreams,
No sensuous song from Hafiz's Persian lyre,
Could stir to-day one heart-leap of quick fire
Within my breast—no; not the orient gleams
Of fancy from the sweet rose-arbored streams
Where Omar sang and stilled the woodland choir,
Could rouse unwonted pulse-beat or inspire
My thoughts to other than their native themes.

For here the prairie stretches far and wide,
And here cool green with white and gold is pied,
And here a thousand happy minstrels sing;
Here hang blue skies, and odorous winds are sent
To balm the restless mind; here is content,
For here is home and love—life's everything.

THE SLEEPING LAKE.

The lake doth dream a quiet water-dream;
For moon-sent spirits smooth' her golden pillows,—
Fearful lest lawless winds should roughly seam
That trancèd smoothness with unruly billows
And stir weird fancies of the glaciated past.
The tall shore-trees, awake in watchful numbers,
Across the beach their blue-black shadows cast,
And guard, with zealous care, those silent slumbers.
There the June-breath of Summer's drowsy fields
In cooler fragrance doth dissolve and mingle,
Till all the odors that the sweet land yields
Are purified to essence rare and single—
Fit perfume for the gentle night to shake
Above the sleep-lulled senses of the lake.

POETRY

In winter time, when close-imprisoning snows
Fright the chill earth with ghostly shapes of white,
Oft have I felt clear fire,—the hopeful glows
That heaven-high thoughts, on poets' scrolls, excite;
But now, when every breath of the sweet air
Carries life-vigor to my laboring heart,
Quelling to silence all foul rebels there—
Grim Hate, swift Passion, and each proud upstart;
Now, when my soul, 'bove its own disarray,
Hangs for a moment's throb in self-true poise,
Lapsing in sunshine, like a beam at play,
Seeking the core of quiet summer joys,—
O, now I find, along one river bold,
More poetry than all the books do hold!

TO THE DECADENTS.

Ye scan the lettered relics of the past—

Poor tremulous and morbid-darkened tribe—
Saying, "This is not Art." Ye read, aghast,

The vigorous records of some time-worn scribe,
Filled with bloodmen and action muscular.

Know 'twas that robust spirit, rude and strong,
That bred a Cæsar for the fields of war,

That nursed a Shakespeare for the groves of song!
O, while the healthful pulses of the world

Still throb with life, unquenchable and sweet,
Leave the insidious poison-dart unhurled—

Speak out pure-toned, or silently retreat:

Away with sickly symbols of foul lust

And crimes that gloom the heart with low distrust!

ADA REHAN AS VIOLA.

Ev'n now we wandered, grossly passion-tost,
Mad with the fierce desire for pow'r and gold;
Strange peace has fallen on our hearts—Behold!
Like care-free children on Illyria's coast
We sit, and all the troubled past is lost—
Lost in the silver lapping of the waves;
Whilst the tone-music of a voice enslaves
The ear and our numb spirit-sense is loosed.

This is the same Viola, love-perplexed,
That stirred the fancy of our poet-king;
Shipwrecked, bewildered, sorely tried and vexed,
Yet gentle-souled, with heart unaltering;
Masking as man, but never once unsexed;
Modest and pure, woman in everything!

ADA REHAN AS ROSALIND.

Content, in quiet hermitage, I'd dwell,
 Gleaning fresh beauty from the serious days,
 Could I but meet at times, in forest-ways,
Such forms as cluster in this woody dell—
Quaint Touchstone, with his jester cap and bell;
 Love-lorn Orlando; Jaques, in a maze
 Of melancholy,—whilst free huntsmen raise
Their song and Arden's bound in music-spell.

What voice may venture boldly to unbind
 This woven charm with no art-chanted wiles?
What voice but one—the voice of Rosalind!
 Behold! she comes adown the leafy aisles,
Happy in perfect poise of soul and mind,
 Rich in clear health and care-subduing smiles!

KING LEAR.

In wakeful dreaminess I lie and read;
Through the thick branchery, cloudless and clear,
Peers the blue summer sky, sweet birds hop near,
And low brook music soothes the neighboring mead;
Yet am I storm-lost, yet my heart does bleed
For pity—Hark! how the wind howls! O, hear,
Above the tempest's voice, the voice of Lear
Rave to the unlistening void—then, faint, recede!

Faint, and more faint, booms the spent storm away;
Again the skies hang clear, the groves rejoice,
And quiet fields again reflect the grace
And beauty of the gentle Summer's sway;
And now I hear Cordelia's soft, low voice,
And see Cordelia's patient-loving face.

TO SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

Since Comus and the laughter-loving gods
Sang their last song in nectarous delight,
What pranks have equaled thine, thou fat-paunched
knight?

What madcap revels, what wild episodes
In life's tame round, what solemn, drunk-wise nods,
What braggart boasting softened by the bright,
Quick glow of wit, can be compared aright
To thine, dear knave, in thy convivial moods?

We love thee, Jack, thou gross, thou sensual rogue!
We'd rather see thy round and ruddy face
Than many a sainted countenance in vogue—
Long-drawn and prim with a self-conscious grace;
So lead the way, thou sly and jolly dog,
To the Boar's Head—we'll follow thee apace.



JOHN KEATS.

One Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth, Oct. 29, 1895.

"O, Weep for Adonais; He is Dead."—Shelley

APOLLO.

Ye who have long in mossy caverns kept
Your brightness from the world, ye who have slept
Away the empty and slow-creeping hours

In dim vine-curtained bowers,—

O, all ye woodland spirits, light and fleet,
Who throng the thick-leaved groves and meadows
sweet—

Rough-bearded satyrs and young sprightly fauns,
Guarding Pan's fleecy flocks on close-cropped
lawns

Among the secret hills; dryads, scarce seen
Through giant ferns and clumps of speary green;
Shy nymphs and naiads, whom the friendly streams
Enroof luxuriously from prying beams—

Lift from your essences this slavish fear;

Appear! appear!

Leave forest coverts and cool dusky caves,
Green mountain valleys and the foam-white waves;
Spirits of earth, air, sea—afar, anear—

Stand forth and hear!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

The music-echoes of Apollo's voice

We hear, and we rejoice;

From glaciated mountains, shivering and numb;

From Southern valleys, from old Ocean's foam

We come, we come!

APOLLO.

Listen!

The modest face of the approaching Day
Peers through the veiling clouds and earth-mist
gray,

And on her brow I see
Contentment and serenity divine,
And her blue eyeballs shine
With luster heavenly.

O, this fair daughter of the favored Year
A child of light did rear—

A son with high and beauty-passioned soul,
With penetrating eyes to see
The dim spirituality

That holds the natural world in mild but firm
control.

Men said that ye were dead,
That all the grace had fled
From Hellas, and that silent stood the lone Par-
nassian mount;

But Adonais spoke,
And his clear tones awoke
The past—Jove reigned, bright water gushed
from dry Pieria's fount.

Then we, who long in trance had lain,
Did leap to life again!

Aroused by one who loved us, who did rove,
In fond imagination, through each grove
And wilderness we haunted, did ev'n fare
Undaunted through the phantom-peopled air;
Yea, cleft the briny secret-hoarding seas
And, in great Neptune's coral palaces

Of quaint sea-masonry, such music made
That keen-eared nereids eager homage paid
And Triton held his spiral horn suspended—
Soundless, until that sweetest sound had ended.
He died—his mortal days were few—and we
Again grew cold in the world's memory.
O, now, before that churlish world ye spurn
And to your silent homes in sadness turn,
From its dumb shrine the Delphian lyre take,
Of the faint past one faintest echo wake
And sing a song of joy for his dear sake.

CHORUS.

As when Aurora, rising, doth behold,
Great Archer, thy first shaft of purpled gold,
 Tinting base objects with a heavenly fire;
Her eyes grow wonder-large, her spirit glows
With emulation, round the orb she goes
 To dress each pallid cloud in bright attire:
Ev'n so thy arrow-swift and burning flow
Of words doth cover all our thoughts, we glow
 With thy reflected light, again we shake
Our limbs with old-time freedom; and, Apollo,
For thy loved son the swiftest star we'd follow,
 Singing a song of joy for his dear sake.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

The full-praised glories of the Spring
Had died—Summer's sweet self had fled,
When Autumn, flushed with harvesting,
 Lifted her gold-brown head
And saw such color-perfect skies

And heard such sylvan harmonies
Wind through the vivid air
That from her hand the sickle fell
Unnoted; in her breast did swell
Keen joy; she questioned there
Why this one day should be so more than earthly fair.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Then we, who ever love to haunt
Beauty's abode, the while we chant
Song that may soothe and ease,
Did speak; and to the mazed Season
Divulged calm Nature's secret reason
For such dear vagaries—
How that the sober Earth,
Hearing of thy rich birth,
O, Adonais, started up as one long dazed with sleep;
And felt quick gladness glow
In her roused heart, and flow
Through her chill arteries with warm impetuous sweep.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Hearing thy voice, thou sanguine child
Of harmony, the Titans bold,
Though vanquished, shook with passion wild
And spoke as gods of old.
Prone Saturn reared his drowsy head
To listen, proud Hyperion's tread
Made all the mountains quake,
Thea and gentle Clymene
Rejoiced; from his dark reverie
Did Oceanus wake,

And deemed his truant seas from Neptune's rule would
break.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Thou, who didst hear Endymion
Sigh to the chaste and lovely moon,
 When nightingales did grieve;
Thou, who beheld'st Madeline dreaming,
Beneath that same moon's wintry beaming,
 On pure St. Agnes' Eve;
Thou, who didst lightly cull,
From gardens beautiful,
Fancy's immortal flow'rs to wreathe round thy re-
sponsive lute,—
For thee, could our high praise
Avail, sweet song we'd raise
Ere through the air we softly fade, dispersed, forlorn,
and mute.

APOLLO.

 No; not mute!
For should ye glide invisible
To where the hiving mortals dwell,
 Charm man and bird and brute
With Adonais' sounding name,
 Till citted plain grows glad again,
And craggy hill and mountain hollow
 Reverberate his fame.

VOICES.

We hear; farewell, Apollo!

SPRINGTIME MUSINGS.

Can the man whose senses five
Are sensitive and all alive
With a ruddy flush of health
View the Spring's unfolded wealth
That beneath his feet doth lie—
Grasses of the greenest dye,
Dainty ferns of quaint designs,
Tangled in a mesh of vines;
White-cupped blossoms that in time,
When the year has reached its prime,
Will blush into strawberries;
Sunny spaces, rich for bees
Harvesting their flower-sweets;
Leafy nooks and cool retreats,
Where the clear, bough-shaded stream
Shuns awhile the garish beam,
Only to leap forth more brightly;
Birds that fly and sing so lightly
Throughout all the happy day:—
Can he view these things, I say,—
These! aye, and a hundred more
From rich Nature's teeming store,—
Scattered upon field and meadow,
Underneath the forest shadow,
On hillside and bank of river,—

Without some uplifting quiver
Of delight and simple joy?

At such times what thoughts can cloy
With their subtle influence
The serenity of sense
And smooth surface of the mind?
Everything is left behind
In the world that fostered it;
All the brain's uphoarded wit—
Thoughts of earth-directed fame,
Plans of wealth-amassing aim,
Dreams ambitious, proud and fell,
Sin-born fantasies from hell,
Doubts and conflicts of the soul,—
All alike do fade and roll
Far away from mortal feeling
And recall, as softly stealing
O'er the late sore-anguished heart,
Comes sweet balm for every smart
Made by angry Fortune's spite.
Then it is each fresh delight
That the waking earth affords
Strikes upon our being's chords
Songs of light and symphonies
Of unforced melodies,
And the opened eyes discern
On the tip of frailest fern
Shapes for spirit-alchemy;
Then emotions pure, and free
From stern thought's impertinence,
Live and glow with joy intense.

Many golden songs were sung,
When the world was fresh and young,
Of the emerald-vested Spring;
Many more will poets sing,
Ere God Mammon's fingers cold
Grasp all hearts in greedy hold;
Or, ere Earth, in Time's hard vise
Compressed to a ball of ice,
Lies beneath her cloak of air,
Bleak and dreary, lifeless, bare.

O, what cares the soul for creeds,
When, on every side, it reads
Lessons of divinest truth,
And beholds the radiant youth
Of the new upstarting year!
All the sorrows that appear
On the calendar of life,
All the dark historic strife
That mankind have waged for ages,
All philosophy of sages,
Songs of poets, heavenly tender,
Prophets' visions, and the splendor
That inspired minds have wrought
In the highest fanes of thought,—
Now but seem of little worth;
For sweet Spring has decked the earth
In a new array of treasures,
And we feel a thousand pleasures,
Born of sunlight and the air,
Floating round us everywhere.

Though the past is gone, is dead,
Yet the blue sky overhead
Gazes on this lower place
With a clear, unfurrowed face,
Canopying all our pleasure
With its never-fading azure.
Ev'n as now I, musing, lean—
Arm-propped—on this bank of green,
Viewing varied joys and pains,
Struggles, triumphs, losses, gains,
Of a little insect world,
With its minute life unfurled
For my all-too-careless eye;
So above our heads the sky—
An impenetrable screen—
Hangs untroubled and serene,
Studying our human lot
With a brow that wrinkles not.

By the spirit-soothing power
Of each sweetly-breathing flower,
By the song of lark and thrush,
By the purl of brooks that rush
On their ever restless way,
By the warmth of sunny ray,
By the leaves of greenest trees,
By the hum of active bees,
By the wings of butterflies,
By all beauty that now lies
On the earth this present hour,—
I do swear that Spring's sweet dower
To the world does put to shame

Seasons of a prouder name
With its prodigal excess—
Shaming Summer's languidness,
Autumn's sad and sober face,
Winter's stiffly-feeble pace.
Higher praise I cannot sing
Than this—O, accept it, Spring!

WHERE?

Where's life's sweet harmony—

Where has it flown?

Far under Discord's sea

It may have gone;

Or to a desert free

Wandered alone:

O, where's life's harmony!

Where has it flown?

Where's life's simplicity—

Where has it fled?

To some Arcadian lea,

Which shepherds tread?

Or can,—O, misery!

Can it be dead?

Where's life's simplicity—

Where has it fled?

Where's life's sincerity—

Where does it dwell?

In some few hearts, maybe,

That hide it well.

In souls, unconsciously?

But who can tell!

Where's life's sincerity—

Where does it dwell?

MAMMON'S BRIDE.

The world that once so freely danced
With Nature through unmeasured space,
Lies now bewildered and entranced
In Mammon's hard and cold embrace.

And all those flow'rs that brightly grew
In Fancy's rich and healthy meads,
Have sucked the common swamp-born dew
That changes all to loathsome weeds.

O Bride! thou art too poorly matched,
Though Plutus' riches all are thine;
Although with gold thy roof is thatched
And gems unnumbered for thee shine.

Forsake that palace, proudly cold,
With all its killing selfishness;
Return to thy dear haunts of old
To dwell a simple shepherdess!

There joyous Pan will welcome thee
To scentful realms of freshest green,
And nymphs and dryads lovingly
Will crown thee as their sylvan queen.

The shepherd swains will blithely dance,
And all their songs for thee will sing,
Till Nature warms before thy glance,
And life becomes one golden Spring.

BOOKLAND.

Let's travel through Bookland together;
'Tis a pleasanter land than you think,
Though the ground is all paper and leather
And the streams and the rivers are ink.

Shall we enter the gates of that city?
Fair Athens! o'erwatched by her hill;
And, in spirit, her orators witty,—
Her poets, are dwelling there still.

Come, sit 'neath this plane tree and listen
To the teachings of Plato the wise,
Till philosophy's grandeur does glisten
As it ne'er did before to our eyes.

Or, if you are too great a roamer
To sit in that grove of cool thought,
We'll travel through Greece with old Homer
To the fields where his proud heroes fought.

We'll speak to Jason and Medea;
With Plutarch at Rome we will feast;
Then we'll take a short trip through Judea,
And drink of the streams of the East.

Over the dark desert of Ages
We'll journey, with hardly a glance,
Till we come to where Dante's stern pages
Awoke the sad Muse from her trance.

With Chaucer we'll merrily wander,
Until Spencer takes us in hand
To lead us where Shakespeare does ponder—
Shakespeare, the bright king of the land.

His throne is of mosses and flowers;
His scepter—a simple goose quill;
His crown—of the laurel that towers
O'er the famed Parnassian hill.

Around him are spirits immortal,
Whose music still lightens the earth;
They have passed through Death's misty portal,
And have risen in happier birth.

There are Chatterton, Byron and Shelley;
And Burns, with soul like a flame;
And throughout that heavenly valley
Are dwelling bright children of Fame.

O, could we but live 'midst those beauties
That the souls of immortals do weave;
But hark! the cold world and its duties
Are calling us, and we must leave.

CUPID'S PRAYER.

Through fair Arcadia blindly wandering,
Led by the siren Fancy far astray,
I chanced near by a vine-embowered spring,
Where, half-asleep, the tiny Love-God lay—
His unstrung bow lay loosely at his side,
And down his cheeks two sun-bright tears did glide.

Starting at length from his uneasy dream,
He shook those watery splendors from his eyes,
Which, falling to the earth, did hiss and gleam,
Till in their place a stainless spring did rise;
Compared to which its purling neighbor's spray
Was as the night-cloud to the sky of day.

Then did young Cupid break his dainty bow,
And all his arrows into bits did shiver;
And, with a sigh of deep heart-rending woe,
Into the stream he cast his empty quiver:
Then wearily he lifted up his eyes,
In earnest invocation to the skies.

"Great Jove!" he cried, "I now resign all power
To kindle love-sparks in these earthly hearts,
Since the harsh world grows colder every hour,
And turns aside my nectar-scented darts.
O, let me die! for men have grown so cold
That darts fall blunted unless tipped with gold.

“The subtle magic of my utmost art
Can force no entrance to these breasts of flint;
Or if by chance I touch a mellow heart,
The world soon kills all tender passion in 't:
Poor bruised Love stands weeping at the gate,
While Mammon feasts in rich, but gloomy state.

“Gone are those days, forever, ever gone,
When shepherd-kings did worship at my shrine,
When my warm name to every swain was known,
And the best honors of the world were mine.
Jove! my vain breath to dull oblivion give—
Since my life's life is dead, why should I live?”

SYLVIUS AND PHEBE.

A PASTORAL.

Sylvius to Phebe said,
As their flocks together fed,
On the green mead's tenderness,—
"Phebe, my own shepherdess,
Dearer to my love-swayed heart
Than the violets that start
From beneath the hedge are dear
To the common grasses near!
Phebe, how this simple scene—
Pastures, sun-kissed and serene,
Nursed by their cool guardian springs—
Sinks into my mind, and brings
From the cells of memory
Strains of life's past melody!
How when I, a sighing swain,
Loved thee, and thou didst disdain
That strong love I breathed from me,
With passion's purest purity;
How thou scoffed at all my vows,
Under Arden's pitying boughs,
Until dainty Rosalind
Did our hearts together bind."

Phebe said to Sylvius,—

“What if I did treat thee thus,
In my girlish fickleness?
Surely thou hadst wit to guess
That a woman’s dearest pleasure
Is to spite her heart’s true treasure;
Otherwise how could she prove
The unselfishness of love?
But enough of bygone sorrow!
Joy is present, and to-morrow
Will be like a bright reflection
Of to-day’s unveiled perfection.
Ev’n as this young meadow brook
Counterfeits the flowers that look
On its laughing loveliness,
So each day will wear the dress
Of the one that dies before it,
That our eyes may e’er adore it!”

Sylvius to Phebe said,—

“As we through these meadows tread,
Let us send our thoughts, in sport,
To Orlando’s distant court.
Canst imagine Rosalind,
Free and joyous as the wind,
Cased in rich and silken gown,
Slow of gait and sobered down
To a staid and courtly dame?
Phebe, no; it were a shame
Thus to image to the mind
The lithe form of Rosalind!
She shall dance before our eyes

In her simple shepherd guise,
As the saucy Ganymede.
Ah! I see that name doth breed
On each cheek a crimson rose—
Let me steal one ere it goes!"

What that shepherd bold did steal
The chaste Muse will not reveal;
But, 'tis said the pretty sheep,
In the clover,—half asleep—
Slowly raised their dreamy eyes,
With a sort of mild surprise;
Then, in wisest manner, they
Turned their heads the other way:
For sheep, spite of Slander's book,
Aren't as foolish as they look.

A MADRIGAL.

O the sky, how blue it is!
O thy love, how true it is!
O the earth, how fair it is!
O our life, how rare it is!

And though Time reaps all of them,
Now we'll heed the call of them,
'Mid the heart's delicious strife—
Nature, Love and Life.

SONG.

O, and what were the joy o' the fields—
The bird-notes loose and free,
The perfumes light and the flowers bright,
To hear, and to breathe, and to see,—
If thou shared not with me, my Love,
If thou shared not with me!

But thou stand'st clear i' the golden warmth,
And hear, and breathe, and see;
And the world's complete, and life's as sweet
As the life of the roving bee:
For thou shar'st all with me, my Love,
O, thou shar'st all with me!

JOY AND SORROW.

Winged Joy, as light and brisk
As a summer fly,
In the heart can dive and frisk—
O, so restlessly!
Quick to come, and quick at play;
Quicker still to dart away.

Sorrow's feet are weak and slow,
Like the tedious snail's;
O'er the bleeding heart they go,
Leaving crooked trails:
Slow to come is truest Pain,
Slow—how slow!—to leave again.

AUTUMN.

'Tis the Autumn of the year!
The air is cool and clear;
The world is colored new
In yellow, white and blue—
Frosty ground and azure sky
 And golden stubble-field:
Pictures rich for soul and eye
 Are now revealed.

What though lusty Summer's green
No more on trees is seen—
The branches flame instead
With leaves of gold and red;
What though singing-birds forsake
 The woods and meadows bare—
The wild fowl rustle in the brake
 And whirr through air.

Wine of life! O tingling air!
Away with every care!
Bounding o'er field and hill,
We'll breathe, we'll breathe our fill:
Clambering the river-bank,
 Shaking the nut-rich trees—
O, what city joys can rank
 With joys like these!

LITERARY MUSINGS.

Corked up in Memory's bottle,
I've gems from Aristotle;
I have gone through Homer's epics and have stuck my
nose in Plato;
I have formed a good idea
Of Euripides' "Medea,"
Aristophanes and Æschylus, and Smith on "The Potato."

Sappho, Ovid, Virgil, Horace,
And many a Grecian chorus,
Are jumbled up together with Josh Billings, Twain and
Nye;

While Shakespeare, Scott and Dickens,
And "The Way to Raise Young Chickens,"
All mix within my head to form a literary pie.

But ne'er in verse or story,
Nor in the drama's glory,
Nor in the bright, romantic tale, nor in the briny yarn,
Have I found that satisfaction,
Which I drew in youth's abstraction
From the blood-and-thunder novel that I read behind the
barn.

THE MAN WHO LIKED A JOKE.

His life had bright and cheerful been,
 Good fortune on him smiled,
His brow was smooth, his eyes serene,
 His temper soft and mild;
No trouble ever came his way,
 His patience to provoke,
Until he said to friends one day,—
 “I like to hear a joke.”

From that time forth he was a wreck,
 His life was dark and sad;
He lost his peace and self-respect
 And drifted to the bad.
And men would point to him and say:
 “There goes the weary poke,
With figure bowed and hair so gray,
 Who likes to hear a joke.”

For wits of every sort and class—
 Each with his funny tale—
Would seize him as he tried to pass,
 Their humor to unveil.
And so it chanced one day, alas!
 His heart in anguish broke:
They laid beneath the frozen grass
 The man who liked a joke.

GREAT CÆSAR'S GHOST.

A lobster salad I devoured that night;
A dozen oysters disappeared from sight—
Some soft-shelled crabs, a piece of hot mince pie,
And divers things that charmed the hungry eye
Soon followed in due time: then home I sped,
Took off my clothes, and rolled into my bed.
No wonder 'twas that in my troubled sleep
I fought with sharks and monsters of the deep;
Waded through blood, was killed a thousand times,—
The living victim of a thousand crimes.
At length my visions took a milder turn—
Tied to a stake I had begun to burn,
When suddenly I woke—or seemed to wake—
And saw a sight that fairly made me shake.

There by the bed a silent image stood
That was not formed of mortal flesh and blood;
A vapor tall and mystical and white,
Shaped like a man, yet unlike human wight.
Its features stern were softened by a wreath
Of laurel branches, while the eyes beneath
Were dull and beamless as the eyes of Death.

Kind reader, 'tis superfluous to write
How my hair rose at such a fearful sight,
To talk of quills on fretful porcupine,
Of chattering teeth and chills along the spine;

Suffice to say that, in my fear and dread,
I pulled the bed-clothes high above my head.

Alas! all efforts to escape were vain—
I felt the blankets slipping down again;
Then growing brave, in my extreme despair,
I asked the specter if he'd take a chair.
"Thanks," said the ghost, "I don't care if I do.
A thousand pardons for disturbing you;
But, grown full weary of my midnight walk,
I just dropped in to have a social talk."

"And who," said I, my fears somewhat allayed,
"Has to my house this flattering visit made?"
The phantom searched his misty robe awhile,
And then exclaimed: "Confound your modern style!
I must have left my calling-cards at home
In some dark corner of my musty tomb.
Well, Julius Cæsar was my mortal name—
Still found, I think, upon the rolls of fame.
I was a hero in that elder day,
And managed generally to have my way.
I made the world a cushion for my feet,
And fought more battles than I need repeat,—
Making things hum, till greedy Death one day,
With sudden roughness, snatched my soul away:
But of my earthly deeds I'll speak no more,
As you, no doubt, have heard of them before."

"Indeed I have," I hastened to reply,
"And (beg your pardon) thought them very dry:
The tortured youth who languishes in school
Must read his 'Cæsar' or remain a fool."

“Ev’n in these times,” remarked the social ghost,
“The ancient customs are esteemed the most.
Men ever love to gaze on things behind,
And with dead lumber load the living mind;
And as, my friend, the more I strive to keep
Up with your time I grow the more antique—
In thought I mean, for modern enterprise
Has bade new wonders from the dust arise;
Invented steamships, chained ’lectricity,
Laid rails on land and cables ’neath the sea:
Still, do I find your greatest minds employ
The self-same themes I discussed when a boy;
See in your papers, newly dressed each week,
The same old jokes that pleased the ancient Greek.
If once again I could have mortal breath,
I am afraid I’d soon be bored to death.”

“Hold on!” I cried, “Some demon, I suspect,
Has prejudiced your failing intellect
Against this country, or you deem it smart
To rail, like Kipling, o’er our lack of art.
No doubt the slaves who slaughtered hogs at Rome
Were more expert than we can e’er become.”

“Hogs!” cried great Cæsar. “I would fain depart—
To talk of such things makes me sick at heart.
O, what a soul that finds no higher flight
Than sticking pigs and feasting late at night!
I will away and seek some nobler mind,
To reasoning given and to thought inclined.
Farewell, base clod! I leave you now with speed.
Great heavens, what a person! Hogs, indeed!”

"I beg your pardon," I remarked; "restrain
Your righteous anger and your seat retain;
And, in the place of lowly hogs and pelf,
We'll talk about your deeds, sir, and—yourself."

This last suggestion charmed the ghostly man;
He kept his seat, and I straightway began:
"So thou wert Cæsar, equally as great
In field of battle as in hall of state;
Wise as an author, as a ruler fit
To judge the world with thy imperious wit:
So thou wert he, who now, a lonely ghost,
Wander around as though your head were lost—
I'd rather be, safe in his cozy bed,
John Smith alive than Julius Cæsar dead.
What wilt thou gain from earthly pomp and fame
When unborn mortals ponder o'er thy name?
What use is it to stand austere proud,
The lofty hero to a gaping crowd?
What use is it—" But here my guest arose.
"Young man," he said, "I think you'd better close
Your wild harangue; your flighty mind is dense
With stupid thoughts, and quite devoid of sense.
Profane not things you'll never feel or know;
Your brain's as shallow as your thoughts are low;
And all—" What his ghostship would next have said
I never knew; he turned and weirdly fled.
"Adieu!" he cried, "'tis time I should be hence."
Thrice screamed a tom-cat on a neighbor's fence,
The town clock struck, a rooster loudly crew,
An officer woke, but did his sleep renew;
A sand-bagged pilgrim moaned in his despair,

And blue-streaked lightning zigzagged through the air.

* * * * *

Chill morning broke: behold me on the floor—
A tangled mass! My father at the door
Was entering my room, and as he crost
The threshold he exclaimed,—“Great Cæsar’s Ghost!”

SONNETS.

A PIECE OF BLUE.

Between two clouds a piece of heaven's pure blue
Stands like an angel 'twixt opposing hosts;
Or, like unchanging God 'mong wavering
ghosts;
Or, like a glimpse of glory, showing through
The cloud-framed window of a paradise—
But no; all similes do prove untrue,
And he—too bold!—who writes of that rare hue
Must first steal ink from heaven's own violet
skies.

O, were I a light cloud! then would I soar,
Serenely borne, through that ethereous main;
Though earthly lusts might seize me as before,
And hurl me down in bud-awakening rain,
Still the kind sun my being would restore,—
Lifting me free to that blue dome again.

THOREAU.

Few are free Nature's children—few, indeed,—
In these cold days, when all-pervading Art
Brushes the morning freshness from the heart
And in conventional gardens sows life-seed:
Few are the minds that break from custom's lead
To hew rough paths, far from the central
mart,—

Seeking to form of God's pure work a part,
And on the living truths of nature feed.

But thou, Thoreau, wert made for life's free plan!
Wert brother to the flow'rs, the rocks, the
trees!

Spurning the tongue-born flatteries of man,
To learn the language of each tongueless
breeze,—

Thou, at the feet of universal Pan,
Gleaned vibrant truth-notes from Earth's
melodies.

THE THOUGHT OF DEATH.

(Decoration Day—1892.)

The thought of death is dreamlike, for it keeps
 Apart from the Mind's children,—like a ghost,
 Ev'n unto shadows. All the brain-born host,
Save it, rise, live and die,—like mist that sweeps
Into the sunlight and dissolves. It sleeps,
 But wakes again—now stilled, now tost—
 'Tis hid by Pleasure's phantoms, but ne'er lost,
Till Death himself the final harvest reaps.
And on this day to every mind it comes
 And bids us pause a moment, as we strew
The Spring's fair blossoms o'er heroic tombs,
 To question if our hearts be loyal and true,
And not vain, hollow, superficial rooms
 To shelter folly from the keen world's view.

A RAINY MAY.

Thou hast, cruel May, with strange perversity,
Belied the promise of thy dainty name
And changed thy former glory into shame;
For whilst, expectant, we did wait for thee,
Longing with eager hearts thy smiles to see,
Cam'st thou attired like the Storm-King's
dame,
In cloud-hued dress and mantle of the same,
And wept more tears than sad-eyed Niobe
Ere she was turned to marble. So, farewell!
But when the cycle of another year
Shows us thy face again, may the soft spell
Of thy remembered charms in thee appear:
Then our loud welcomes will the glad wind tell,
And blow sweet praises in thy pardoned ear.

JUNE GREETING.

Much has been sung of June, and honeyed phrases
Have fall'n so often on her flattered ear
That she may greet this tribute with a sneer,
And turn her head to seek those richer praises
That round her buzz, like bees round garden vases;
Yet, if her mood be kindly, she may hear,—
For few there are who hold the rose so dear
That they would look disdain upon the daisies.
Therefore, sweet month, I dare to give thee greet-
ing—

Thou first mild child of Summer, whose caress
Cradles those laggard buds that Spring in fleeting
Left still unnursed in lonely friendlessness,
Until they bloom to beauty, and, repeating
Their fragrant thanks, bless thee who did them
bless!

SLAVES OF MAMMON.

I'd rather dwell with satyrs in a wood,
And tread brisk measures to an ill-tuned lute;
Yes, rather range half man and half a brute,
Dreaming away my life in solitude,
Giving free rein to every passing mood,—
Than mix with those who lead the mad pursuit
In chase of wealth; who tramp on good repute,
Break noble hearts, and track their way in blood.

By heaven! it is a sin—a black, foul sin—
A sin too foul and black to find a name—
To grind down hearts into a golden dust;
To mount on souls, and lightly step within
That heartless kingdom, where jointly do reign
The twin-born monarchs, deformed Wealth
and Lust.

FANCY.

Who has not met at times, on Life's rough road,
The fairy Fancy at her busy play,
Spinning light webs and painting pictures gay
O'er Nature's wayside screen? 'Tis then the load
Of perplexed thought that finds its deep abode
In human minds yields to the magic sway
Of calmer, softer themes and glides away,
While airy dreams are in its place bestowed.
Dreams—only gainless dreams—but yet how
sweet!

How full of peace and soothing pow'r they are!
Lifting the soul above the grimy street,
Where toil and strife and worldly scheming
jar

Life's higher music; for young Fancy's feet
Climb up the moonbeam path and rove from star
to star.

MUSIC.

The world is rich with music. Every stream
Outpurls its song with voiceful eloquence;
The winds that whistle through the forest dense
Strike on the harp-like trees some ghostly theme;
The ocean waves in mournful dirges seem
To vent their sorrows and their griefs intense;
The caves with lengthy echoes charm the sense—
All nature is encased in Music's dream.
The birds, the bees, the crickets, all proclaim,
In grateful numbers, their accustomed song;
While, like sweet Orpheus of ancient fame,
Who thrilled the senseless rocks with passion
strong,
The human soul, kindled by heavenly flame,
Hath caught those sounds which to the gods
belong.

THE CAPTIVE SPRING.

The captive Spring is fettered in green moss
And bound with woven lengths of viny sweetness,
As though the old Earth, fearful of the loss
Of her fair child, had checked the eager fleetness
Of those lithe limbs (dancing to Time's quick measure)
In bonds more intricate than aught e'er shaped
By Dædalus' art from Vulcan's melted treasure:
But lo! already she has half escaped
From those bright meshes and is wandering,
New garlanded and with fresh violets crowned,
Through budding forest, and by shady spring,
And o'er the meadow's emerald-dusted ground.
Linger, mild Season, pray no further roam,
Nor heed old Saturn in his airy dome!



THE LILAC BUSH.

A lilac bush under my window grows,
And I deem it sweeter far
Than the fragrant breath of the cultured rose
That blooms in a gilded jar.

For it gazes at me with its hundred eyes
Of the richest purple hue,
Like bunches of stars of a miniature size,
Torn down from the heavens of blue.

It nods a "good morning" and "how do you do"
To flowers that flourish near by,
And has a kind look for the whole floral crew
And the birds that over it fly.

It breathes on the air with so sweet a perfume,
Suggestive of regions more blest,
That though many flowers in the universe bloom,
I love the fair lilac the best.

MORNING.

Young Morning combed her tresses
And drank a cup of dew;
Then from her many dresses
She chose a robe of blue,
And o'er her shoulders fair a golden mantle threw.

The baby stars were sleeping
Behind a purple bank,
As, through the thin clouds creeping,
Down to the earth she sank;
Down through the heavy air, so still and cold and dank.

But soon, beneath her touches,
The cold gray shadows died,
And from Night's gloomy clutches
The joyful world did glide,
While Nature's rarest scenes sprang up on every side.

'Twas then the roguish Morning,
With wild and healthful glee—
All crude assistance scorning—
Sprang down upon the sea,
Tinting with gold the waves so clear and silvery.

Then up the seabeach gliding,
She plunged into a wood
Where flowers wild were hiding
In tangled solitude,
And bade each tender face peep from its dewy hood.

A moment did she linger
Among the blossoms fair,
Op'ning with gentle finger
The sick and dying there;
Then on her journey sped—sweet phantom of the
air!

The birds, with happy singing,
Did greet her rosy face,
As on high branches swinging
They viewed the lightsome grace
With which she rode the sea or moved from place
to place.

And so the fair Aurora,
All beautiful and light,
Drove Darkness far before her
With unrelenting might,
And dressed the chilly world in garments warm
and bright.

But when old Sol was shining
From golden throne on high,
Upon a beam reclining
She mounted to the sky,—
Bidding her earthly friends a fond and soft good-
bye.

ON THE RIVER.

Drifting
Down the shallow, lazy river,
Through the reeds that gently quiver
Near the shore,
And the water-lily lifting
With my oar.

Dreaming
'Neath an overhanging willow,
Where my boat has found a pillow
In the moss,
Dreams all free from worldly scheming
And earth-dross.

Framing
Visions fraught with truer pleasure
For the soul than golden treasure,
Sparkling bright;
And life's petty troubles shaming
With their light.

Rowing
O'er the waters calm and gleaming,
When the evening stars are beaming
Far above
And a spicy breeze is blowing
From the grove.

Ever
In my mind a scene is dwelling—
Its true beauty far excelling
All the rest—
'Tis a modest, peaceful river
In the West.

SONG OF THE BUTTERFLY.

I'm a golden butterfly,
Freed from my dark cocoon;
I spread my wings beneath the sky
Of rosy June;
To flit a while from flow'r to flow'r,
In wild ravine and woodland bower;
To live the pleasures of an hour,
And perish soon.

But ever gay and light of heart,
I rest by verdant springs,
Or over field and meadow dart
On gauzy wings.
The children chase me in delight,
And try to stop my swerving flight,
But soon I flutter from their sight—
Poor, clumsy things!

And when the day has passed away,
With all its warm sunshine,
And, dark and gray, the shadows play
On tree and vine,—
Within a cozy flower I creep,
And fold my wings and drowse to sleep;
There's not a joy more true or deep
Than this of mine!

THE SOLDIER'S GRAVE.

Strew lightly o'er the soldier's grave
The springtime blossoms fresh and white,
And deck with wreaths and garlands
bright
The silent couches of the brave.

They fought—they died—they lie at rest
Beneath yon low and grassy mounds;
No more for them the trumpet sounds
To thrill the patriotic breast.

But though they mingle with the dust
In that dark kingdom, where Decay
Sits thronèd in his halls of clay,
Their memory is free from rust.

For well we love to honor those
Who bravely fell amid the fight,
Who sank in all their vanquished might
Upon the field among their foes.

We honor both—the blue, the gray—
For time hath blotted from the mind
All bitter thoughts and words unkind
And washed all prejudice away.

And we remember only this,—
They bravely fought—they bravely died;
And, hero-like, their souls should ride
Along the ether seas of bliss.

Then spread upon each grave to-day
The fragrant blossoms of the spring,
And simple wreaths and garlands fling
Above the soldier's honored clay.

May 30, 1891.

MORNING-GLORIES.

O, ye frail and pretty blossoms that beneath my window bloom,

I love the dewy beauty of your fresh and cultured heads;
And your brightly-tinted petals, sleeping in their own perfume,—

Ye fair, but lazy flowers, that are ever in your beds!

But the eager morning-glory is too full of life to stay
In the bowers of her sisters and the soil that gave her birth;

She has reared her leafy ladder long before the break of day,
And now is climbing lightly from her playmates on the earth.

And as I raise my window in the daydawn calm and still,
When mist floats o'er the garden, like a canopy of lace,
The ambitious little rover scrambles down upon the sill,
And gazes boldly at me with her round and open face.

A welcome, pretty climber! and a thousand welcomes more,
For the early morning freshness that encircles thee around,

As in robes of pink and purple, wrought at Nature's choicest store,

Thou wav'st thy fragile brightness far above the lowly ground.

And although the wind will tear thee, and the frost subdue
and blight,

And thy glory fade as quickly as all earthly glory here,—
Still, this sharing of thy beauty may redeem thy fading
plight;

Creating glories, richer far, around thy leafy bier.

SLEEP.

Like tossing ships, which, far out on the bay,
Sail whitely through the evening's purple light;
In dusk and distance fading slow away,
'Neath the drooped mantle of approaching Night;—
So do the senses gradually forsake
The weary and exhausted mind,
And, borne upon a drowsy wind,
Fade into cells unknown, but leave sweet Sleep behind.
And Sleep, kind Goddess from the azure lake
Of dim forgetfulness! does sit and weave
Wild thoughts and fancies into dreams that make
The present bright and happy, though they leave
No clear impression on the brain defined;
But, like the misty clouds which form at eve,
Take all the hues and shapes that Fancy can conceive.

Then, free, the poorest dweller on proud earth
May stroll in raptures through celestial bowers;
May feast in palaces 'mid light and mirth,
Hear sweet-voiced birds, and gather fragrant flowers;
May live in dreams such joy-encompassed hours,
That when he does awake again
To earthly care and toil and pain,
'Tis with a braver heart he bears Life's galling chain.
Thrice-blessed Sleep! what were the heart's frail powers
To suffer or resist, to fight or bear,
To brave the drench of Fortune's chilling showers,—
Without thy near regard, thy tender care?
No quiet hand but thine couldst balm the brain
With touch more delicate than sweetest air,
Or robe the somber world in colors light and fair.

GLORY.

There's scarce a path to glory
That is not dark and gory,
That is not strewn with broken hearts and
red with human blood:
Upon Life's stormy ocean
The waves, with ceaseless motion,
Bear down the weak and frailer barks, and
sink them 'neath the flood.

Fame's crown is shining brightly,
But to touch it e'er so lightly
The soul must meet a thousand ills and tramp
them sternly down;
Must ward off Envy's arrow
And darts that prod and harrow,
And bravely thrust all foes aside to seize the
sacred crown.

O, thousand times 'twere better
To live as Glory's debtor,
To walk the common paths of life and bear
the common load,
Than to strive, with endless pining,
To excel the stars at shining,
And raise but clouds of blinding dust on
Reputation's road.

HOPE.

As some wild bird that sweeps the lonely lake

At eventide, in search of place to rest,

And finds a shelter in the tangled brake

Where twining branches form a natural nest;—

So Hope, sweet comforter of the oppressed!

May skim but lightly o'er the troubled mind,

But claims a refuge deep within the breast—

Its native home. There, clear and well defined,

It mingles with our lives, braving cold Fortune's wind.

And when Life's leaden skies appall the heart

And care and grief engross the gloomy hour,

'Tis then that Hope new courage doth impart,

And cheers the mind with true consoling power:

So have I seen in some dim forest bower

A sickly blossom raise its drooping head,

As o'er it sprayed the cool, refreshing shower

That brought it strength, when all its strength had fled;

Gave it new life and hope, and saved it from the dead.

SPARKS FROM SAPPHO.

I.

The stars that glitter round the moon,
When she unveils her lovely face,
Grow pale and sickly,—fading soon
In dim and unregarded space:
Alone the radiant Queen doth glow,
And silvers all the earth below.

II.

Among the bending apple trees,
Where coolly winds the river,
Down streams a sleep-inducing breeze,
Through leaves of drowsy quiver.

III.

Come, Venus, show thy features bright;
And, in this golden cup,
Serve nectar,—mixed for love's delight—
Come; fill the goblet up!

IV.

O Muse! enthroned on seat of gold,
Breathe forth that strain of music old
The sage of Teos sung;
That strain so soft with cadence rare,
Which, fraught with themes that witch'd
the air,
Rolled sweetly from his tongue.

V.

The moon has set; the Pleiades
 To far gloom-vaults have gone;
 'Tis dark midnight; Time's tread is light—
 I lie on my couch alone.

VI.

When thou art dead,
 Then art thou ever dead—
 Cold in neglect thy nameless dust shalt lie;
 No tears in reverence shed,
 No loving tongue to hymn thy memory
 Out of the tomb;—
 For thou disdain'st the lovely flowers that bloom
 Round Pieria's springs.
 Lo, this thy doom:—
 To flit with lonely ghosts through Hades' gloom
 On loneliest wings.

VII.

O, Dica, crown thy flowing hair
 With parsley green and flowers fair,
 And with thy hands, so soft and white,
 Form wreaths of blossoms dewy bright;
 For all the gods that dwell above
 Such floral tributes dearly love;
 But from the clouds they sternly frown
 On those who lack the perfumed crown.

VIII.

My daughter Cleis is as fair
 As flow'rs with golden petals rare;

If Lydia's treasures all were mine,
For her my wealth I would resign.

IX.

The evening bringeth home again
What rosy morning scattered wide,—
The goats and sheep forsake the plain,
And children seek their mother's side.

X.

"Bright youthful days, bright youthful days,—
Ah, tell me whither art thou fled?"

"Time ne'er retracks the once-trod ways;
The past is dead, the past is dead!"

THISTLEDOWN.

See the silky thistledown
Drifting through the air!
O, how could it have come to town
Where all is dark and bare?
Where grimy walls and smoke entomb
Much stronger things than pappus plume.

See it floating down the street,
Like a flake of snow;
Only it doth scorn the feet
Of the crowd below,—
Preferring on the wind to ride
A dainty snowflake vivified.

But the kindly breeze will die
In the heat of noon—
Crushed upon the ground 'twill lie,
O, too soon, too soon!
For it is too frail and pretty
For the harsh and busy city.

INCONSTANCY.

What we would not do, we do;
What we would do stays undone;
For the mind of changeful hue—
A mental chameleon—
Now is brilliant, rich and gay,
Now a dull, lack-luster gray.

E'en the shadows in the wood
Show more constancy
Than the brain-begotten brood,
Whose wings are never free;
But, close-clipped for Custom's gaze,
Flit through an unworthy maze.

DISCORD.

Schoolboys did hear a robin sing,
Out in the happy field,
Whose clear and unrestrained notes
A wealth of joy revealed.

While one, with rapt, uplifted face,
Shared in that free delight,
The others quickly searched for stones
And put the bird to flight.

What need of further words to tell
The instincts of mankind;
How 'neath the rays of Beauty's sun
We wander, cold and blind!

A few may catch a passing glimpse
Of light, and thrill with joy;
But most do spurn fair Nature's work,
And blaspheme and destroy.

APRIL WEATHER.

MORNING.

The violet folds its petals blue,
All shivering with pain;
The redbreast lifts his head to sing,
But soon beneath the downy wing
He thrusts it back again;
The rabbit furls its haughty ears
And looks for hollow stumps;
The cynic raven seeks an oak,
Too miserable for scarce a croak,
And sits there in the dumps;
Even the frogs, in soggy heather,
Are croaking at this April weather.

AFTERNOON.

The violet turns its purple face
To breathe the sunny air;
The redbreast, on a budding tree,
Pipes forth its grateful melody,
Or sweeps the meadows fair;
The rabbit skips with lively pace
Adown the fragrant vale;
The cynic raven now doth long
To imitate the linnet's song
And change its dismal wail:
All Nature's children stand together
In praising April's lovely weather.

A MORNING INCIDENT.

Now Aurora rose up from her crystalline bed,
In her airy pearl-spangled pavilion;
And she threw a rich cloak o'er her shoulders and
head,
With a scarf of the rarest vermilion;
And she said, with a yawn that undimpled her
smile,—
“I fear I have slept for a very long while;
I went to bed last on a bright April day,
And now, I declare, 'tis the middle of May!”
Then she harnessed her horses without more ado,
And down the empyrean highway she flew,
Till she met the great Earth, in her mantle of blue,
A-rolling around like a creature demented,—
Bewildered with mist, by storm-fiends circum-
vented.
Then the child of Hyperion, the poor wretch con-
doling,
Prayed to her proud father for aid;
And the lazy old god, in his high palace lolling,
Heard the prayer of the pitying maid:
So together they scattered the mist and the night,
And the rheumatic Earth danced a jig in delight.

BELATED FLOWERS.

Those floral stars that should have shown
Their beauty to the Spring alone,
Or but have felt, with nearing death,
The brief delight of Summer's breath,—
Now lift their dainty petals up
To catch the dew in fragrant cup,
And bloom near Flora's scented booth
In all the glory of their youth;
For though the Spring, in sullen mood,
Refused to nurse the pretty brood,
And tried, like Saturn, to devour
Her children in their natal hour,
They did escape her cruel wrath
To spread their brightness round our path;
Telling the world that joy, though late,
Will triumph o'er the blights of fate.

—June, 1892.

THE WAIFS.

O, think of the waifs, the poor outcasts of Fortune,
Who fight for their lives 'mid the gold-greedy throng;
Where the trumpet of Gain sounds the popular war-tune,
And the choirs of Mammon all join in the song.
They are launched pilotless on the dimest of pools,
Where even the shrewdest of men are but fools,
To encounter the storms of this life, and the gales
That may tear into tatters the strongest of sails.

Then help not to banish that unconscious fragrance
That Nature has placed in the heart of each child,
Whether born in a palace, or raised among vagrants,
Or bred in the tent of the Indian wild:
O, seek not to crush the sweet softness of youth
In a premature mold of a shallow untruth;
But cherish the bud, as its petals unfold,
And the heart of the flow'r will be fair to behold.

That sneer or that blow is the acme of sinning
That raises fierce thoughts in the mind of the young,
While the kind word of praise, or the smile that is winning,
Are the diamonds that drop from the lips and the tongue.
So think of the waifs who are braving the storm,
Nor make it more dark with the shade of your form;
But hold your best torch o'er their perilous way
That they may see to live by the light of its ray.

ALL IS SAID.

Shall I let this day
Slip away?
Its gentle azure hours, O, shall they die!
And not one word to weave
The mysteries that cleave
Unto the soul into that great life-mystery?

Let this perfect day
Slip away;
A million words are said on every side:
The earth, the air, the sea,
Have solved the mystery
Ages ago—they sing it now; all is supplied.

SQUIBS.

THE WORLD.

The world is like a crowded bus;
A few good men, perhaps,
May find a seat, but most of us
Must hang on by the straps.

O, WHY?

“O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?”
The haughtiest man whom we meet in the crowd
May think we are scanning his beauty and clothes,
When we see but the soot on the end of his nose.

IN MAZING PATHS.

What man should flee from he would fain attack;
What most we value are the things we lack.
As o'er Life's plain in mazing paths we stray,
The sweetest flow'rs are trampled in the way—
Our native talents weaken and decay.

A DIFFERENCE.

“Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And Beauty draws us with a single hair.”
But when, alas! we are beguiled to wed,
Then Beauty drags us by our hair instead.

CRANKS.

The town is overrun with cranks—we find them everywhere—
We meet them on the cable-cars, and on the thoroughfare;
But, O! the greatest freaks of all that blot poor Nature's ranks,
Are those that notice what we do, and say that we are cranks.

PATRIOTIC MARCHERS.

The patriotic marchers may indeed look rather fine,
When they start out in the morning

In
A
Long
Straight
Line;

But it shocks us, in the evening, more than tongue
or pen can say,
To see them straggle back again

In
A
Zig-
Zag
Way.

WISEACRES.

Some men, with sayings wise and trite,
Our heads would fain be stuffing;
Yet—strange!—we feel the most delight
When they are saying nothing.

TWO POETS.

Two poets live upon our street
Whose fancies have poetic feet,
With which to rove the universe
And prove a blessing—or a curse.
Now, one is healthy, sleek and fat,
And sports a high and silky hat;
His scribbling neighbor's lank and lean,
And wears a slouch that's fading green.
The former writes poetic "ads"
About the latest business fads;
His fingers play with heaps of pelf—
The other rhymers is myself.

SAFE.

Sarcastic Pope once wrote, with bitter sting,—
"A little learning is a dangerous thing."
If this be true, there live some men we know
Who'll ne'er meet danger in this world below.

MY DIARY.

January 2—

Got up to-day—
Ate breakfast—caught the train—
Worked—ate lunch—drew my pay—
And now am home again!
Confound a diary!

THAT DREADFUL LIST.

O, can it be some secret woe
That clouds her lovely face?
Or is it fever's hectic glow
That leaves its dreaded trace?
Perchance, from strange and sudden fright
Her mind through chaos drifts;
But no—she's sitting down to write
A list of Christmas gifts.

THE POET'S TURKEY.

"Matilda," cried a poet, "they rejected all I wrote;
But we had to have a turkey, so I pawned my overcoat;
I thought we'd have a dinner one day at least this year,
So I stopped in at the butcher's and bought this birdie,
dear."

But his wife cried out in anguish as she tore the paper loose,
"Great Scott! it's not a turkey—it's an

Old

Tough

Goose."

SILENCE.

"Silence is golden" 'tis agreed
By moralists and scholars,
And also by my friend in need
Who borrowed fifty dollars.

A SOLID FACT.

Poets may tell us that Life's but a dream,
A walking shadow, or a runaway stream;
But we poor toilers, by our troubles racked,
Consider Life a more substantial fact.

HIS VALENTINE.

He bought a gorgeous valentine
With two pierced hearts upon it.
He wrote: "To Lily,—nymph divine!"
And then composed a sonnet.
He put it in his pocket-book—
(You know he might have lost it)
And now, alas! it meets his look;
For, after all the pains he took,
He quite forgot to post it.

FOILED.

One night a brave copper was walking his beat,
When his form so majestic was o'ercome by the heat.
As he lay in a hallway a large vicious cat
Crept in at the door, and on top of him sat.
Like a demon incarnate it drank in his breath,
While the poor fellow snored all unconscious of death:
But his nature so hardy such danger defied,
And the cat soon lay drunk at the officer's side.

CLUBS.

Alas! that man may truly grieve,
And strive his breath to smother,
Who only has one club to leave
To come home to another.

THOSE INCANDESCENT LAMPS.

Old Zep and his wife Hannah,
From the wilds of Indiana,
Came in to see our city, and to take in all
the sights.
And he said: "We're not that class
O' folks who blow out gas;
Yit people here put cases round their
darned ole lights."

TO CRANKYVILLE.

The short-haired women and the long-haired men
March up the hill to Crankyville, and then march down
again.

WOMAN.

(With apologies to Sir Walter.)

O Woman! in our hours of spree,
As sharp and fitful as the breeze:
But when the fates have laid us low,
And stretched us on the couch of woe,
Thou giv'st us drugs and liquids cruel
And make us live on horrid gruel.

WHAT MAKES THE MAN.

In a slow-going time 'twas thought and said:

“Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow.”

But in this age that proverb should be read:

“Naught makes the man but ducats bright and yellow.”

Men miss not worth amid their toil and greed,

But want of gold is noticed soon indeed.

NO PACE TOO SWIFT.

Sinners at first seek Satan in a hesitating way,

With a sort of ling'ring feeling that badness will not pay;

But when they once get started, and the conscience has
grown black,

They gallop to perdition on the

Kite-

Shaped

Track.

YOU'VE SEEN HIM.

Alas! this is the saddest thing

That heartless fate imposes,—

To meet the man who loves to ring

His money 'neath our noses.

RETRIBUTION.

The rhymer sat down on his rickety chair,

In front of his rickety table;

He snapped at his pencil, he pulled at his hair,

And tried to revise an old fable.
Then the back of his chair gave a groan of despair,
And fell to the floor with a clatter;
And the table it creaked, till he thought that it squeaked:
“Why don’t you turn out some new matter?”

BEAUTY’S LIMITATIONS.

What power is there more eloquent
Than Beauty, pure and innocent,
To stir the soul with love?
Life’s other attributes are meant
The grosser body to content;
For Beauty will not pay the rent,
Or clean the kitchen stove.

CRUSHED.

I have sneered at lovely woman and at her many freaks;
Have cynically viewed the faults with which her nature
reeks;
But when, last night, I fell in line, and through a store did
drift,
And roved a labyrinth of aisles to buy a Christmas gift,—
I sank down on a bench—a wreck—with all my nerves
unstrung,
And watched the way those women bought, and meekly
held my tongue.

A PROPHECY FULFILLED.

An old man once in sorrow said:
 “My son’s a wayward youth;
I fear some day he’ll go astray—
 He cannot tell the truth.”
Alas! his prophecy came true.
 His son soon went to work:
And now he lies in manner wise,
 For he’s a weather clerk.

TOO TOUGH.

A wild, bloody ranger came out of the West;
On all the wide border his gun was the best:
He had shot the poor Indians, he had shot down his
 pards,
And could snuff out a candle at a cool hundred yards.
But when upon Clark street one night he did roam,
The place was so tough that he lit out for home.

THE SKATER.

See the skater, blithe and merry,
Skimming, whirling, like a fairy,
Or an eagle, swift and airy,
 On the wing!
See her cut those neat devices,
Where all clear and smooth the ice is,—
Figures, forms, and names, and prices,—
 In a ring!

But look now—O, sight appalling!
She is falling, falling, falling,
And upon the ice is sprawling—
O, poor thing!

THE PRODUCE MAN'S GIRL.

Her eyes are like twin drops of dew
That glisten on an onion—
Her hair? 'tis brownish, like the fig
That's wrapped around my bunion:
Her cheeks are like the rosy beet—
Like these we have for sale, sir:
Her brow, her neck, her dainty ears,
Are like those turnips, pale, sir:
Her breath is like a carrot, sweet;—
In fact, she is so pretty
The jealous girls upon her street
Are moving from the city.

KNOWLEDGE.

Man's boasted knowledge is as thin
As city milk in pails of tin,
Although at times its flow may seem
As thick and rich as country cream:
At first we may be prone to doubt;
But, with the years, we find it out.

YE RIME OF YE ANCIENT SILVERITE.

It is an ancient Silverite,
And he stoppeth one of three,—
“By thy long gray beard, I am afeard;
Why dost thou stare at me?”

He holds me with his glittering eye,—
“There was a time,” quoth he,
“When the flowing bowl did warm my soul,
As it flowed full plenteously.

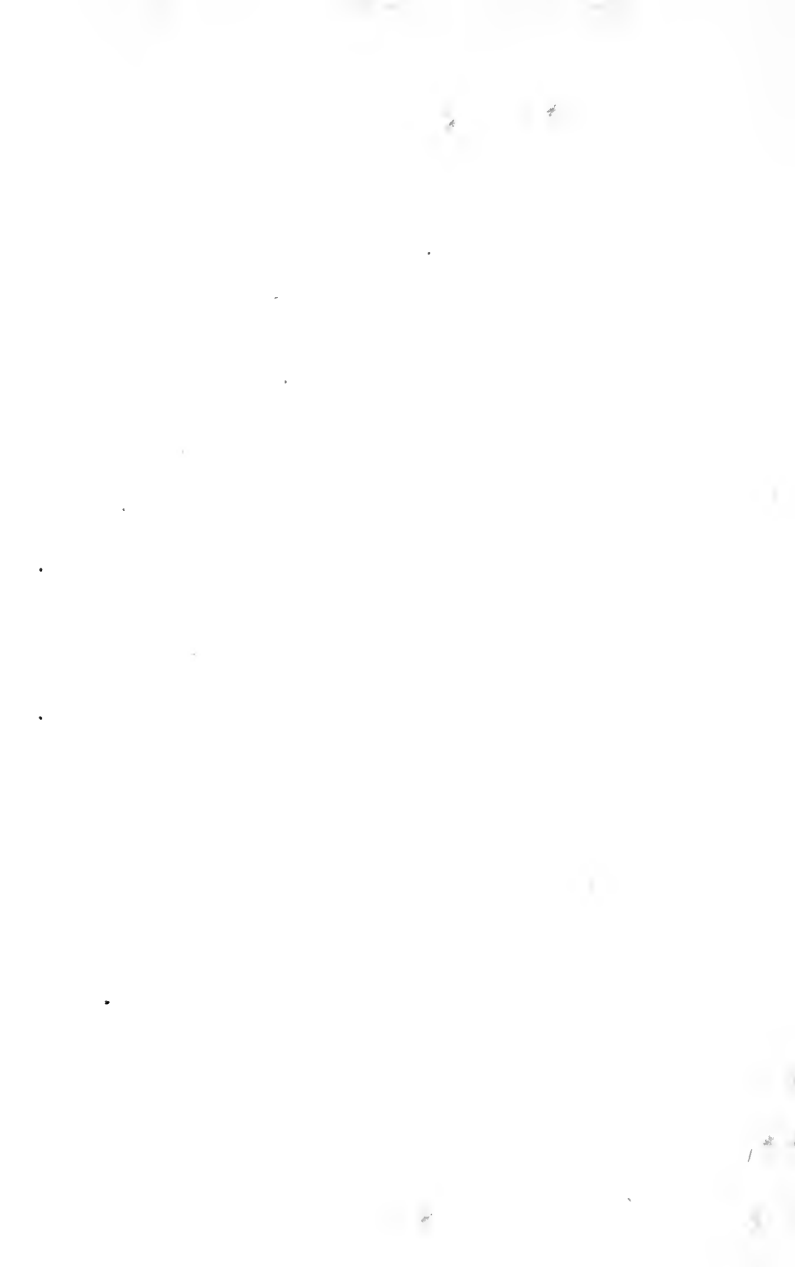
“Election past, my good vote cast,
O now no man doth think,
That, though there’s whisky all around,
I’ve not one drop to drink!”

A SUMMER TRAGEDY.

The portly landlord of the Lake Breeze House
Stood out on his chilly veranda;
And the Goddess of Sorrow his spirit did douse,
With a cold, foggy wind that swept through his blouse,
As he wept,—like the great Alexander.
And he cried: “O, ye Powers, from celestial bowers
Look down on your shivering slave:
O, send me a boarder, ye mighty Recorder,
Or I sink in a premature grave!”
But the wind and the tide were all that replied;
And, buttoning up his greatcoat,
He leaped to the sea * * * the fishes, in glee,
Soon enjoyed a fine table d’hote.







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